



## Project Understanding

**Prospect (def.)** - the possibility or likelihood of some future event occurring.

The enclosed qualifications summary and proposal are intended to illustrate how the Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC) / Neel-Schaffer (N-S) project team would approach developing a critical path forward for McComb City. Within the body of this proposal, we have provided project examples from communities similar in population to McComb City, which are experiencing or have experienced issues and challenges resulting from an event, or series of events, that have the potential of changing the course of their future. KKC understands that change is inevitable. It is both our job and passion to assist our clients in managing and directing the nature of growth and change in order to sustain a sense of place, community character, and quality of life that residents value.

We understand that McComb City is potentially on the brink of significant demographic and economic change, resulting from, at minimum, the Tuscaloosa Marine Shale Play. Our current work with the Texas cities of Seguin and Cuero (project sample attached), respectively on the northern and southern edges of the Eagle Ford Shale Play, have exposed and conditioned KKC / N-S planners and engineers to the full array of challenges such communities must face in order to manage the profound changes resulting from largely unmitigated growth and development, including deterioration of thoroughfares, housing shortages, lack of capacity in the water and wastewater systems, and the loss of municipal employees. As a result, we have developed a deeper understanding of what McComb City will soon face. Our knowledge and understanding of the services as well as impacts associated with oil and gas development will allow us to provide McComb City a planning document that will address all opportunities and challenges of the anticipated development.

Additionally, McComb City must also continually develop policies and practices that anticipate and plan for the replacement of aging infrastructure, improvement of housing and neighborhood conditions, enhancement of parks and recreational amenities, and establishment of a viable workforce in order to attract new businesses and industries to the area, beyond the oil and gas focus.

We understand that the intent of this planning assignment is to develop a Comprehensive Plan - a working guide for policy development and implementation that is durable and enforceable, yet flexible and accommodating, enabling rather than overly restrictive. The City wants a plan that will guide and direct how it conducts its business over the next 20 years and invests in itself, with respect to the provision of municipal services, public facilities, utilities and transportation infrastructure. Because the decisions that McComb City makes today will have a

### Neel-Schaffer

KKC's team member, Neel-Schaffer, Inc. has been working closely with the counties and communities in Southwest Mississippi to respond to the growth pressures resulting from the development of the Tuscaloosa Marine Shale (TMS). Neel-Schaffer's offices in Texas have been assisting communities as they plan for and deal with the impacts on their infrastructure and community services resulting from the explosion of residents and opportunities that have followed the development of the Eagle Ford Shale and the Permian Basin.



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significant impact on the physical character, livability, and economic attractiveness of the community in coming years. In short, McComb City wants a business plan – a policy document that is comprehensive, crafted from a 30,000 foot vantage point while being realistic and implementable with prescriptive, “on the ground” application of proposed policies and actions. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a collective vision for the City and its residents to use in deciding the course of their future.

Our approach to developing McComb City’s Comprehensive Plan recognizes the plan elements outlined within the RFP and as defined within Section 17-1-1 of the Mississippi Code of 1972. These elements have been included under recognizable headings to ensure broad-based public understanding. Working with the citizens and community leaders of McComb City, we would develop a comprehensive planning policy document to guide economic and spatial growth and development over the next 20 years.

#### **Supplemental Phase: Strategic Direction and Immediate Action Program**

We recognize that undertaking a major comprehensive planning program is a big step for the City. The City’s elected leadership understands that McComb City is poised for significant growth. They also recognize that a comprehensive plan is needed to position the City to take full advantage of the benefits of growth, while avoiding potential pitfalls associated with largely unmitigated growth. At the same time there is concern about the resources, capital and other, required to undertake such an ambitious planning effort. Legitimate questions include:

- ◆ *Will this money be well-spent?*
- ◆ *How can we ensure that the plan we receive is implementable and will achieve our objectives?*
- ◆ *Are we developing the right plan elements to guide and direct growth?*
- ◆ *So much is happening right now; is it too late to regulate development?*

There is an old saying that warns about, “closing the barn door after the horse has bolted.” This bit of wisdom essentially questions the sensibility of taking necessary precautions only after the event has already taken place. It is never too late to initiate a comprehensive planning program. Yes, there are a lot of unknowns, and we understand the reluctance to jump-in with both feet when some would prefer to first test the waters.

The concern about needing development regulations in place now rather than 18 months from now is also valid. Based on our own direct experience with oil and natural gas shale plays, the greatest impacts occur within 12 to 18 months of the initial “find.” It is very important to get in front of the rapid pace of this kind of development – the man camps and new motels, truck parking lots, increased traffic congestion, heavy equipment staging areas and pipe laying yards – all of which typically occurs just outside of the City’s corporate limits. At minimum, the City needs to establish performance standards for new development, and thoroughfare plans that reduce the impact of truck convoys and otherwise direct new and increased traffic flows away from residential areas and Downtown.

Bottom line, *the City must act sooner than later to protect and maintain the character of your community.* Given these essential considerations, we propose a supplemental phase comprehensive planning phase that would run concurrently with and complement the cost-effective development of a full and focused comprehensive plan. The key objectives of this immediate project phase would be to establish development regulations now, for the lands within and immediately outside of McComb City's corporate limits, to a newly established Urban Growth Boundary - so as to ensure that impending development does not compromise the character of McComb City. This proposed Strategic Direction and Immediate Action supplemental phase is discussed further within the Work Program portion of this proposal.

*The KKC Team feels very strongly that the City should undertake this supplemental Strategic Direction and Immediate Action Program phase concurrently with the development of its Comprehensive Plan.*



